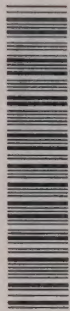


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Ontario. Commission on Post-Secondary
Education in Ontario
[Briefs]

Ontario Commission on Post-Secondary Education
in Ontario
Brief in Response to the

Wright Commission (Draft) Report on Post-Secondary
Education in the Province of Ontario

[1]

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PREAMBLE

The purpose of this brief is to examine specifically those sections of the Draft Report of the Wright Commission on Post-Secondary Education dealing with the opportunities for women in post-secondary education and employment. While commending the commission for its awareness of the discriminatory practices against women in both post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, we feel the Commission needs to scrutinize more carefully its proposals in these areas.

The proposal suggesting the establishing of the University of Ontario raises many questions and reservations:

- (a) Will it have coordinating functions for all post-secondary education in Ontario?
- (b) Is there a lurking suggestion that universities will then be assigned specific areas of specialization with little or no overlapping? By departments? Areas of study within departments? Who is to decide? We are here concerned with the less mobile student, faculty, or administration member who, for whatever valid reason, suddenly discovers that he or she is deprived of a position or study facilities because his or her area of specialization has been relocated from, for example, Toronto to Sudbury, while he or she is more or less fixed to the original location.

The Report claims to favour an attitude of positive response to the "changing social attitudes to women." However, the brief itself shows a discriminatory bias at many points. For example, on page 7 of the Report one reads, "Or, as the proverbial mother would put it, 'Where did I go wrong?',"

The implication in such a statement is that the female role is one of mother and in that role she bears sole responsibility for family life.

While accepting a certain honesty of attempt in recommendation 44, (the biological role of women should be recognized by the provision of maternity leaves, tax relief for child care, and the creation of day care centres,) to meet real needs of women with children involved in post-secondary education, we deplore again the emphasis not only here but throughout the report on the biological role of women as if men had no biological role, and therefore by implication no real responsibility for family life beyond the economic. It seems apparent to us that the report regards the function of women with children to be still essentially that of mother and housewife and their commitment outside the home to be of a secondary nature which obviously precludes this work ^{is} ~~be~~ having the same importance as men's.

It is obvious to us then that any change in opportunities for education and employment for women at the post-secondary school level cannot take place unless those government officials administering post-secondary education are aware of and take active responsibility for changing the attitudes towards the role of women in society.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada indicates clearly the effect upon society of long standing stereotyped attitudes toward the sex roles in our society. (pp.175-6).

"52. This analysis of sex role imagery in a representative selection of elementary school textbooks clearly indicates that a woman's creative and intellectual potential is either underplayed or ignored in the education of children from their earliest years. Although such influence may seem insignificant to an adult reader, it is important to remember that the readers are children and that they learn through models whom to imitate. The sex-roles described in these textbooks provide few challenging models for young girls and they fail to create a sense of community between men and women as fellow human beings.

53. The Commission deplores the use of textbooks that provide so little recognition of the capabilities of women. Therefore, we recommend that the provinces and the territories adopt textbooks that portray women, as well as men, in diversified roles and occupations.

54. The young girl identifies early with the traditional female role of wife and mother, reinforced as it is by social approval. At adolescence, when she learns of possible careers, she is often not ready to consider them seriously, partly because she has not grown up in the expectation of having a career of her own and partly because of the personal conflict of interest at this age between study and popularity with the opposite sex.


55. Although the attitudes of young people are changing, sometimes a girl still regards success in terms of appearance and personality rather than in terms of intelligence and ambition. The goal of marriage often becomes an alternative to aspirations in other fields and so she is much concerned about attracting boys. She is inclined to be careful about competing with them and to play down her intelligence and her ambitions. Early engagements or the marriage of friends may be envied. She accepts the popular conviction that, if a woman is not married, she would prefer to be while a man is a success whether or not he marries. The words bachelor and spinster elicit very different responses in our society. These attitudes are likely to be reinforced by her peer group which tends to be the most influential force in her life at this stage.

56. The Commission believes that the adolescent girl should be made aware of the fact that, in this day and age, marriage will not be the exclusive preoccupation of her life. In the interests of a more equal partnership between women and men - in the family, at work and in the community - a girl needs an education which will open a wide range of options for her."

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Inter-relationship Among Bodies Responsible for Education in the Province of Ontario

If the Wright Commission be really serious in its concern that women should have full access to post-secondary education and employment, it is important that it also take responsibility for working with other government bodies involved with elementary and secondary education in order that a real partnership in family, work and the community can develop among the men and women in our province.



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2. Collection of Statistical Data

- a) The Commission must ensure the collection, from all post-secondary institutions, of statistical data dealing with the relationship between female graduates (in categories such as married, unmarried, with children, without children) and the hiring, remuneration, and promotional policies of each department within the institutions; it must guarantee the availability of such statistics to all interested parties.
- b) The Commission must, further, ensure the compilation and availability of similar statistical data on the number of high administrative posts held by women and the ratio of women affected by administrative decisions.
- c) Finally, the Commission must ensure the compilation and availability of statistics on the number of women appointed to Senates and other university governing bodies and their committees and examine the ratio of women affected by the decisions of these bodies and their committees.

Undoubtedly the above data will show that women are in fact under-represented at all levels of decision-making within a university. We, therefore, recommend that

- a) Since women constitute 51% of the population of Canada, 51% of administrative posts within the university be held by women.
- b) Every effort be made to ensure that more women hold Senate appointments and appointments on other university governing bodies and committees.
- c) Every effort be made to establish a career pattern through which secretaries with requisite qualifications and motivation may rise through the ranks to administrative and executive posts.

3. Part-time Studies

We applaud the Wright Committee's recommendations which speak to the importance of providing for study on a part-time basis. However, we must not merely remove legal barriers to the part-time acquisition of higher education, but we must also provide opportunities and assistance to ensure that such education is pragmatically possible. This should have the effect of encouraging women, who, for a variety of reasons, frequently must take degrees on a part-time basis, to continue their studies right up to and including the Ph.D. level.

- a) In planning a part-time programme of study, the university should make every attempt to ensure that the programme is coherent and will provide the necessary courses for the degree sought.
- b) Opportunities for part-time study must be available not only to those students who are employed on a full-time or part-time basis outside the home, but also to homemakers who find it necessary to acquire degrees in an intermittent or part-time programme.
- c) Opportunities for part-time study must be provided during the day and at night, to accommodate a diversity of part-time student schedules. Should this require expansion of existing facilities or the creation of new facilities, money for such capital expenditures must be made available.
- d) An Ontario wide policy of equivalent academic-credit transfers must be undertaken to allow the greatest possible mobility to those part-time students who, by reason of job or mate's job, find themselves unable to complete degree requirements at a single institution. This should not, however, necessitate the development of a homogeneous Ontario wide

University programme since we believe that diversity is essential to intellectual vitality.

- e) Graduate studies must allow part-time participation for whatever reason, not merely the relevance of study to research or job demands.

Therefore:

- i) Provision must be made for part-time students in all graduate faculties.
- ii) Such part-time students must be eligible to compete for the same scholarships, bursaries, and student loans available to full-time students.
- iii) Part-time places and funds must be available to all adult students without respect to age.
- iv) Recommendation 10 - In order to facilitate the return to learning opportunities for all professionals, salaried employees, and wage earners, legislation and/or structures should be devised for the purpose of investing funds and/or percentages of income, salaries or wages, annually in order to provide for periodic study leaves where it is so desired by the professional, salaried employee or wage earner. (For example, an employee who has foregone 10 percent of his salary would be able to take a study leave of some six months every five years.) This recommendation clearly discriminates against homemakers who typically do not have an income of their own. We therefore recommend that public funds be provided to compensate for the invested or saved ten percent of salary unavailable to the unpaid homemaker. This would allow him or her the same periodic study leave available to those in a salaried position.
- v) The selection of mature part-time students must be made on the basis of evaluation methods which will broaden the

definition of "experience" and "motivation" and admit such experience and motivation as equally valid criteria of selection as secondary school marks, or in the case of graduate students, of undergraduate grades.

4. Women Faculty Employed in Post-Secondary Institutions: Recommendations 39, 40 and 41

These three recommendations are designed, presumably, to prevent discrimination against women in their future careers at a level beyond the discrimination presently practised in 1972. The wording of these recommendations implies that the present proportion of female Ph.Ds is a satisfactory level on which to base recruiting percentages of university teachers (Recommendation 39) and thence, in future, on which to base non-tenured and tenured female proportions of university faculties (Recommendations 40 and 41).

This implication is utterly unsatisfactory. The present percentage of women enrolled full-time in universities in Canada at the undergraduate level is 35%. At the M.A. level in Ontario the proportion of female students receiving M.A. degrees in 1970 was 24% and the proportion of female students receiving doctorates was 10%. (all these statistics can be found in the D.B.S. Surveys of Higher Education.) Clearly, this is the result of discrimination.

Thus in university education the percentage of female students decreases as the status of the degree increases. Also, at the graduate level this percentage of female students has decreased, not increased, over the past 50 years, (1920-25%, 1930-28%, 1940-22%, 1950-22%, 1960-15%, 1970-19%, D.B.S. Surveys of Higher Education).

To base any projections of future percentages of female faculty members on the proportion of doctorates received by women in 1972 continues discrimination

which obviously has been occurring both before women enter their university education and throughout it. In order to redress this discrimination we make two proposals:

- a) As an interim measure, women who receive doctorates should be given preference over male Ph.Ds in faculty teaching appointments.
- b) Attempts should be made, either by persuasion or legislation, to increase the proportion of female graduate students in Ontario universities. The proportion of female students at all levels of education should be increased up to their proportion in the population - 51%.

5. Daycare - Recommendation 44

The relative absence of women both in graduate school and among university faculty is in part due to the fact that many women wishing to pursue higher education also occupy the role of mother. While many men are able to combine the roles of student, faculty member, and father, the same does not hold for women who wish to pursue higher education. It is the contention of this brief that the equality of women in terms of opportunity, admissions procedures, and financial assistance means little unless the University and the community at large contribute services to share the responsibilities of family care. Many women are barred from higher education because they find they must assume sole responsibility for their children. In line with the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, we believe that the care of children should be the shared responsibility of father, mother, and society. If, as the Wright Commission argues, post-secondary education is to be universally accessible, there is no question

as to the need for day-care centres as an integral part of the university community. We deplore the Commission's only token recognition of the need for day-care centres in Recommendation 44 which identifies the biological role of women with child care. The assumed relationship between child care and a woman's biological make-up has served long enough to keep women out of higher education because of the widely held view that for a woman to leave her children, even if only for a few hours, is in fact a violation of her nature. Such innuendos have no place in a Commission Report of this kind which purports to stress the need for universal accessibility to post-secondary education.

- a) Day-care centres should be available to all families who work within the university. This includes both undergraduate and graduate students who are full-time as well as part-time. It also includes faculty and staff employed by the university.
- b) Because of the diversity of the group needing day-care, it is necessary to have two types of day-care centres available. These are:
 - i) a participatory cooperative day-care centre where parents participate in the centre, and
 - ii) a service centre which is professionally staffed. While parents participating in the former type of centre would not normally be required to contribute financially, parents sending their children to the service centre would contribute fees on a sliding scale.
- c) We further suggest that a number of middle-sized (30-50 children) day-care centres be created in various parts of the university. This suggestion is in line with the view of officials who administer

the Province of Ontario Day Nurseries Act which regards fewer than 30 children as uneconomical and more than 50 as administratively unwieldy.

- d) We strongly urge that in any recommendations dealing with student housing, such as Recommendation 12, provision be made for the creation of day-care centres on the premises.

We feel that the necessity for a network of day-care centres within the university community cannot be stressed enough. We would remind the Commission that women constitute 51% of the population and most of them take on the role of mother at some point in their lives. If post-secondary education is to be truly universally accessible, the provision of day-care centres must be considered a priority.

6. Representation on Government Committees and Co-ordinating Boards: Recommendations 50 (Senior Advisory Committee), 51, 52, 53, and 54 (Co-ordinating Boards).

Since women comprise 51% of the population, representation of women on these committees and boards should be 51% and this should be explicitly stated in the recommendations.

7. Funding: Recommendation 64

In discussing public financing of students attending post-secondary institutions the Commission pledges itself to the equal treatment of women. However, the Commission repeatedly refers to married women as a special case with respect to repayment of loans. While we agree that repayment of loans should not be shifted to husbands, we deplore the fact that the Commission has not chosen to make a recommendation to that effect.

- a) Recommendation 64 needs really close scrutiny and clarification so that the result of the attempt to give women equal treatment is not that women will stay home after marriage in order to avoid repayment of loans received.

- b) Loans incurred by single women should not be shifted to their husbands

- c) The rules for eligibility for student loans must be made more flexible in order that students whose parents will not support them may be eligible for student loans.

In general we do not approve the idea of the funding scheme's favouring those who live at home. (see Col. 1, Para. 1, p.48).

In conclusion, we again commend the ~~Committee~~^{Commission} for its recognition of the discrimination that has been and is being practiced against women. However, we cannot impress on the ~~Committee~~^{Commission} enough the importance of their making specific and comprehensive recommendations to overcome past wrongs and to prevent present and future discrimination in education. In as much as education has been one of the chief agents in perpetuating this discrimination against women, we feel strongly that the educational system should consider its first priority the redressing of these wrongs.

